



Downtown Investment Grant Application

FY 2015

Virginia Main Street

Department of Housing and Community Development

600 East Main Street, Suite 300

Richmond, VA 23219

804-371-7030

Applications accepted on CAMS starting: July 18, 2014

Last day applications accepted on CAMS: August 29, 2014

Grant awards announced: approximately September 30, 2014

Grant funded projects must be complete and grants closed: June 1, 2015



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
Partners for Better Communities

Virginia Main Street (VMS) Downtown Investment Grant

The [Virginia Main Street Program](#) is a community economic development program that follows the Four Point Approach™ of the National Main Street Center. Each year local Main Street organizations work to attract to their historic commercial districts the substantial private and public investment necessary to: (1) breathe new life into blighted and vacant buildings, (2) establish and expand independent businesses that make downtowns fun and unique consumer destinations, and (3) create mixed-use downtowns where people once again live above bustling commercial establishments and property owners maximize the productive use of every floor of downtown buildings.

To date, VMS communities have been very successful in creating environments that encourage private investment downtown. In 2013 alone, VMS communities saw over \$48 million in privately funded improvements to downtown historic buildings, \$17 million in public improvements to help support and encourage private investment in downtowns, the start-up, expansion or retention of over 270 unique businesses in historic commercial districts, and the creation or retention of nearly 900 jobs for local community members seeking employment.

Downtown Investment Grants (DIG) will help local Main Street organizations accelerate the economic revitalization of their historic commercial districts by allowing them to implement innovative strategies, plans and programs that boost and accelerate private investment on Main Street.

Downtown Investment Grants are not capped, but grant awards will not typically exceed \$45,000. DIGs help Main Street organizations implement projects that:

1. Facilitate innovative means of encouraging private investment that result in measurable economic improvement in the Main Street district;
2. Directly support the community's vision for encouraging the private investment necessary for the economic revitalization of the Main Street district;
3. Align with the Main Street organization's mission and the board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district; and,
4. Develop volunteer leadership, capacity and expertise in the Main Street organization.

Projects are to be completed by June 1, 2015.

The DIG funds will not be awarded for continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts or any other operational expenses. Funds will not be awarded for predictable organizational expenses for which the board could have reasonably planned (ex. general marketing materials, website updates, financial management expenses, etc.). Funds may not be simply "passed through" the Main Street organization to 3rd parties.

Instructions for Application Submission

Please note that applications must be submitted electronically through the Agency's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS). To access CAMS, visit the website at www.dhcd.virginia.gov and click on the CAMS icon in the upper-right hand corner.

Internet Explorer 8.0 or Chrome are the recommended browsers for CAMS. Remember to SAVE often.

Submission Requirements

All grant proposals and supporting documentation must be submitted on CAMS by 11:59 PM on August 29, 2014. Proposals not submitted accordingly may be disqualified.

Applicants must submit completed responses to all appropriate questions and include all required attachments.

Grant Eligibility

Grants are available only to designated VMS communities and must be administered through the designated local VMS organization. Special exceptions may be made for high functioning commercial district affiliates. Applicants must be current on all VMS reports.

All applicants must comply with DHCD's financial auditing requirements by uploading to CAMS a copy of the organization's W-9 and a copy of the organization's most recent audit, reviewed financial statement or 990, as applicable, by the grant's application deadline (August 29, 2014).

Characteristics of a Strong Application

A strong application will clearly explain how the proposed project will encourage private investment that results in measurable economic improvement in the Main Street district. The project will support the community's vision for encouraging the private investment necessary for the economic revitalization of the Main Street district, will clearly align with the mission of the Main Street organization and will address one or more of the Main Street board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district. The implementation of the proposed project will empower board and committee volunteers as leaders and will help develop and capitalize on the expertise and financial support of the organization's stakeholders and community partners.

Grant Payment

Grant funds will be paid upon completion of agreed upon project milestones. Milestones will be negotiated and included in a memorandum of understanding that will be signed by both DHCD/VMS and the grantee prior to the start of the project. Projects must be completed no later than June 1, 2015.

Leverage Requirement

All projects must provide a **minimum of 1:1 leverage**. In-kind services provided by local government, consultants and other Main Street stakeholders and partners may be included. Time contributed solely to the implantation of the project by volunteers from the Main Street organization or the organization's partners may be included. Volunteer hours are calculated at \$24.49 per hour (https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time).

Scoring

Grant proposals will be scored on a 0-100 point scale with a 10 point bonus available to applicants. DIG funds are limited and only those proposals exceeding the minimum 70-point threshold will be considered for funding. The project scoring methodology is included in Appendix A.

Application Instructions

The application on CAMS will require the organization to:

1. Provide a description of the proposed project and explain how it is an innovative strategy that will attract private investment to the Main Street district that will result in new and stronger businesses, building renovation or construction and/or increase downtown housing.
2. Explain how this project aligns with the organization's vision, mission and strategic goals for the Main Street district as well as a list of the current board members and committee chairs.
3. Upload multiple supporting documents as attachments.

Project Description

Enter the following information into the relevant text box on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Provide a detailed description of the proposed project and its intended outcomes. Explain how this is an innovative strategy that will attract private investment to the Main Street district that will result in new and stronger businesses, building renovation or construction and/or increase downtown housing. Fully describe both the measureable and non-measurable outcomes that are expected from this project.
2. Describe how the proposed project furthers the community's vision for the Main Street district, aligns with the mission of the Main Street organization and addresses one or more of the board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district.

Required Support Documents - Organization Leadership

Enter the following information into the relevant text box on CAMS. Please limit responses to no more than 500 words per text box (about one written page).

1. Community's **Vision statement** for the Main Street district.
2. **Mission statement** for the Main Street organization.
3. Strategic Plan that lists the board's priority **goals** for the Main Street district.
4. A list of current board members and committee chairs.

Required Support Documents - Project Implementation Capacity

Upload the following documents as attachments in CAMS.

1. **Project Work Plan** – Provide an effective and appropriate work plan for the project that includes tasks, responsible individuals, timeline and budget. Please use a format similar to the one included in **Appendix B**.
2. **Mini-Resumes** - Provide “mini-resumes” that describe the project related expertise of each individual/organization listed on the work plan. No more than one paragraph of relevant information per individual/organization.
3. **Budget** – Provide the following budget information:
 - a. **Project Budget** – Provide a project budget that includes all project related line items for expenditures and all project related line items for funding sources.
 - b. **Explanation of Cost Estimates** – Provide detailed information on the source of the cost estimates and the date the estimates were received.

- c. **Leverage Verification** – Provide verification of leverage funds including contracts, memorandums of understanding/agreements, award letters, and other documentation that confirms the commitment of other resources for the project. Include documentation and calculations for in-kind contributions and volunteer hours.

APPENDIX A

Review and Scoring of DIG Proposals

DIG proposals will be scored by a team of reviewers using the following questions and scored using a modified Likert scale. Scores from all reviewers will be averaged to determine an application's final score. If the reviewers agree that not enough information was provided to score any one of the questions #1-9, the reviewers will stop reviewing the application and will withdraw the application from consideration for funding.

Review Questions:

1. *I am very confident that the proposed DIG project is clearly aligned with the community's vision for the Main Street district.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(3) Neutral(5) Agree(7) Strongly Agree(10)

2. *I am very confident that the proposed DIG project aligns with the Main Street organization's mission and very clearly addresses one or more of the board's strategic planning goals for the Main Street district.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(3) Neutral(5) Agree(7) Strongly Agree(10)

3. *I am very confident that this project is a unique and innovative strategy that, in the very near future, is very likely to attract private investment to the Main Street district resulting in new and stronger businesses, building renovation or construction and/or increase downtown housing.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(6) Neutral(10) Agree(14) Strongly Agree(20)

4. *I am very confident that Main Street organization will leverage substantial community resources and partnerships for the implementation of this project and that the proposed leverage meets or exceeds the 1:1 minimum requirement.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(3) Neutral(5) Agree(7) Strongly Agree(10)

5. *I am very confident that project work plan is appropriate, well thought-out and includes all of the information necessary to ensure the timely completion of the proposed project.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(3) Neutral(5) Agree(7) Strongly Agree(10)

6. *I am very confident that the identified project roles and responsibilities demonstrate a level of capacity necessary to implement the proposed project work plan.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(3) Neutral(5) Agree(7) Strongly Agree(10)

7. *I am very confident that the proposed project budget was well researched and is accurate and that leverage funds are sufficiently secured (by letters of intention) to ensure that along with DIG funds there are enough identified financial resources to complete the proposed project on time.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(3) Neutral(5) Agree(7) Strongly Agree(10)

8. *I am very confident that three years after the grant is awarded the proposed project will still be benefiting the Main Street district as much or more than in the original grant year.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(6) Neutral(10) Agree(14) Strongly Agree(20)

BONUS POINTS

9. *I am very confident that the proposed DIG is not only a very good project, but is an innovative approach to Main Street revitalization that no VMS communities have or are implementing.*

Strongly Disagree (0) Disagree(3) Neutral(5) Agree(7) Strongly Agree(10)

Main Street Work Plan

Related Board Goal(s):

Anticipated Results/Measure of Success:

Project Team Members:

[illegible]